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ABSTRACT

A study investigated transition to the location of remedial instruction, repeated use of drills, and regular class management activities as they occurred in the Accelerated Literacy Learning (ALL) model, an early intervention program for at-risk students. Qualitative and quantitative investigation of the small-group, second-grade, in-class ALL model of compensatory literacy instruction occurred during a 9-month period at the ALL school and a comparison school. Subjects were 3 teachers and 15 students at the ALL school and 12 students in the traditional model comparison group. Results indicated: (1) minimal time loss in transition from one location to the assigned ALL area; (2) no evidence of instruction time loss in repeated use of drills such as worksheets; and (3) regular class management activities subtracted a minimal time from the instruction. Recommendations include collaborative research by grade-level teachers on time management; determination of the exact role of the Title I aide; and increased preservice teacher training in direct instruction of small groups. (Contains 13 references and 3 tables of data. An appendix contains the classroom observation instrument.) (RS)

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An American ideal is for children to start school able and ready to learn. This is often not the case. Nine out of ten students who are in the lowest reading group at the beginning of first grade will remain there throughout elementary school (McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991; Stanovich, 1986). Yet, the majority of students entering school with low levels of literacy are believed capable of becoming skillful readers and writers by the end of primary school (Clay, 1979; Hiebert & Taylor, 1994; McGill-Franzen & Allington, 1991).

Local school officials seek to provide a solution to the problem through a Federal program known as Title 1. This Federal statute, a part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), provides financial assistance to local education agencies to meet the special needs of educationally deprived children from low socioeconomic families.

Compensatory education funded under Title I provides for remedial services in math and reading instruction. School administrators typically accomplish this through a pull-out, individual, or small group setting (Legters & Slavin, 1992). Because of the great expenditure of public funds, 70 billion dollars since 1965 (Commission on Chapter 1, 1993), the Title I/Chapter 1 program comes under continual scrutiny. One area of concern is quantity of

instruction time (Carter, 1984; Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Leinhardt, Zigmond, & Cooley, 1981).

The purpose of this paper is to present alternative solutions to the time loss and time fragmentation found in the traditional Title I programs. Three areas of time conservation are the focus of this discussion: transition to the location of remedial instruction, repeated use of drills, and regular class management activities. These areas are investigated as they occur in the Accelerated Literacy Learning (ALL) model, an early intervention program for at-risk children. The focus of the program is to identify and provide special instruction in order to accelerate the reading and writing progress of these children.

Qualitative and quantitative investigation of the small-group, second-grade, in-class Accelerated Literacy Learning (ALL) model of compensatory literacy instruction occurred during a nine month period at the All school and a Comparison school. The subjects included Teacher A, Teacher B, and Teacher C from the ALL School, 15 students in the second-grade ALL group identified as Students 1 through 15, and 12 students in the traditional model comparison group identified as Students 16 through 27.

Data Analysis

Observers recorded transition time in minutes from the

regular class seating to an ALL small-group area at the beginning of each observation session; the Classroom Observation Instrument (Appendix 1) contained the documentation of the events. Each observation round consisted of three days a week for three weeks for a total of nine days per round. Three rounds of observation totaled 27 days observation per teacher for the year. The total days for all teachers equaled 81 days. Recorded transition time summaries are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Transition Time From Class to ALL Small-Group Area

Round	I	II	III
Teacher	Min.	Min.	Min.
A	11.5	12.0	11.5
B	16.5	7.0	18.0
C	53.0	27.5	12.0
Total Minutes	81.0	46.5	41.5

Figures presented in Table 1 represent three rounds of observation, one round each in October, November, and February. The faculty members are identified as Teacher A, Teacher B, and Teacher C in this table. Teacher A spent from 11.5 to 12.0 total minutes during the nine days of each round of the observation sessions moving students from one location to another in the classroom. Teacher B needed 7.0

to 18.0 minutes each round. Teacher C required 12.0 to 53.0 minutes for the passage to the small group area. The three teachers spent a total of 169 minutes during the 81 sessions. The transition time per observed instruction session averaged 2.086 minutes compared to 25 minutes that Allington and McGill-Franzen (1989) noted. At the end of the lesson students prepared for lunch or enrichment classes. Observers reported no use of structured drills or worksheets during the observed lessons.

Observers also tallied instruction time interruptions related to the ALL group. These interruptions resulted from incidents like noisy off-task activity, office intercom announcements, and other class students questioning the teacher. One instance that distracted everyone occurred as a parent entered the room and called out "Hi," to her child across the room. Another interruption evolved due to a series of three separate observations, one each by the principal, the ALL observer, and the exceptional program teacher. These initial incidents could not be attributed to the student; however, they created a student climate that produced program interruptions. The observer tallied the resultant interruptions presented in Table 2.

Teacher A experienced 17 interruptions during Round I, 11 during Round II, and 15 during Round III for an average of 1.59 per session during the year. Teacher B dealt with 17 interruptions during Round I, 11 during Round II,

and 3 during Round III for an average of 1.14 per session during the year. Teacher C encountered 42 interruptions in Round I, 28 in Round II, and 42 in Round III for an average of 4.14 per session during the year.

In addition, a visual scan of the remaining students at five minutes and 15 minutes revealed the number of students

Table 2

Interruptions by Regular Class Members

Round	I	II	III
Teacher			
A	17	11	15
B	17	11	3
C	42	28	42
Total	76	50	60

on-task with some type of constructive activity or off-task with visually apparent non-constructive activity. Anyone counted off-task could present a potential interruption for the teacher. Since a part of the second grade teachers' agenda involved moving students toward academic and social responsibility in the classroom, this researcher felt it important to observe how students handled independent work during the ALL remediation session. These results are shown in Table 3.

Teacher A had 46 students off-task in Round I, 18 in Round II, and 12 in Round III for an average of 2.8 per observation. Within this total, observers noted 16 students off-task at five minutes. As time without active teacher involvement with the remainder of the class lengthened, the number of students off-task increased to 30 at 15 minutes during Round I. In Round II four students had moved

Table 3

Students Considered Off-Task

Round	1		2		3	
	5 min.	15 min.	5 min.	15 min.	5 min.	15 min.
Teacher						
A	16	30	4	14	2	10
B	0	6	0	4	0	2
C	23	31	32	39	24	31
Total	39	67	36	57	26	43

off-task at five minutes and 14 students at 15 minutes. In Round III two students had off-task behavior at five minutes and 10 students at 15 minutes.

Teacher B had six students off-task in Round I, four in Round II, and two in Round III for an average of 0.44 per observation. During Round I no students exhibited off-task behavior at five minutes into the lesson but six appeared off-task at 15 minutes. Round II observers noted no

students off-task at five minutes but four off-task at 15 minutes. Round III totals revealed no students off-task at five minutes while two students seemed off task at 15 minutes.

Teacher C had 53 students exhibiting off-task behavior in Round I, 71 in Round II, and 55 in Round III for an average of 1.96 per observation. Round I revealed 23 students exhibiting off-task behavior at five minutes into the lesson and 31 at 15 minutes. In Round II 32 students displayed off-task behavior at five minutes and 39 students did so at 15 minutes. Round III showed 24 students off-task at five minutes, and 31 students off-task at 15 minutes.

Summary of the Data Analysis

For two decades investigation of Title I/Chapter 1 compensatory reading programs has concentrated on concerns in the program. Allington and McGill-Franzen (1989) noted transition times of 25 minutes per student in the traditional Chapter 1 pull-out model causing them to express concern about the value of the remediation model they examined. In contrast, this investigation of the ALL program revealed an average transition time of 2 minutes and five seconds for the entire ALL group to move from one location in the room to another. Field notes corroborated this habit of smooth passage.

Another issue (Leinhardt, et al., 1981; Allington, Stuetzel, Shake, & Lemarche, 1985) concerned instruction

time loss through indirect reading activities, including work sheets. According to Rowan and Guthrie (1989), these work sheets substituted for higher-order skills in instruction. The second-grade ALL teachers in the study avoided this problem by using no worksheets during the reading instruction time. Thus, instructional time loss through the use of worksheets had no tallies at the end of the observation sessions.

Time loss through routine class management activities presents a continual challenge to the teacher committed to the value of direct instruction. The ALL teachers expressed this concern as they considered adding an in-class, small-group model of instruction. Pursuing the issue of instructional quality for remediation students, Quirk, Trisman, Nalin, and Weinberg (1975) observed 30% of the teacher's time spent in management activities. Allington and McGill-Franzen (1989) indicated nonacademic activities, including classroom management could account for 25 minutes per remediation period implying the schools' lack of careful attention to effective teaching. In the second-grade ALL program evidence testified of minimal instruction time loss in management activities for the remainder of the class. Teacher A averaged 1.59 interruptions during the 29 observations throughout the year. Teacher B averaged 1.14, and Teacher C averaged 4.14 interruptions resulting in instruction time loss.

Observers also looked at how the remainder of the class

handled independent work during the ALL remediation session seeking to determine the extent of need for teacher management. The observers recorded an average of 2.8 instances of off-task behavior by students not in the small group per ALL session for Teacher A, 0.44 instances for Teacher B, and 1.96 instances for Teacher C. In retrospect, there appears to be less cause for concern about instruction time loss for the in-class, small-group, second-grade ALL model than that expressed for the traditional Chapter 1 pull-out model as reported in the literature review.

Conclusions

Review of the data presented in this study leads to the following conclusions:

1. Data revealed minimal time loss in transition from one location to the assigned ALL area. The average transition time equaled two minutes and five seconds per session per teacher.
2. No evidence of instruction time loss in repeated use of drills such as worksheets appeared during the observations.
3. Regular class management activities subtracted a minimal time from the instruction. They did vary according to teacher: 1.59 interruptions per period for Teacher A, 1.14 for Teacher B, and 4.14 for Teacher C.

Student off-task behavior presented a minimal threat to teacher concentration with the remediation group. Evident off-task behavior occurred an average of 2.8 times in one class, 0.44 times in the second class, and 1.96 times in the third class.

Recommendations

Recommendations resulting from this study fall into two categories, research and practice. Being able to objectively evaluate program innovations is one valuable outcome of any classroom oriented research. This researcher recommends the following:

1. Collaborative research by grade-level teachers on time management issues for small-group, in-class activity.
2. Replication of parts of the study to determine the exact role of the Title I aide who assists in the small-group, in-class model as opposed to an aide's duties in the traditional Title I pull-out remediation programs across the curriculum.
3. Increased pre-service teacher training in direct instruction of small groups which differs greatly from tutorial or large group practice.

Willig (1993) concluded, ". . . the obvious solution to reading failure. . . is to identify the myriad of associated factors. . ." (p. 104) and then move on to appropriate

development of the answer. The small-group, in-class, second-grade ALL model of compensatory literacy instruction is one answer proposed to the education community in a time of Title I budget cuts and increasing rates of reading difficulties among primary children.

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APPENDIX 1.

Second Grade ALL Lesson Observation - Day 1

Teacher _____ Date _____	
Transition time from regular class to ALL lesson: _____ min.	
Teacher begins activity on time yes no	
Time loss to regular classroom management: Tally no of times	
Regular class students off-task: 5 min. 15 min. into ALL lesson	
Congruence of reading materials evidenced: yes no	
MIN. INTRODUCING/READING NEW BOOK	TALLY
1. ORAL ATTENTION TO CUING STRATEGY	
2. DISCUSSION	
3. TEACHER SCAFFOLDING ACTIVITY	
4. STUDENTS READ TRADE BOOKS	
5. OTHER ACTIVITIES: ILLUSTRATING, CREATIVE DRAMATICS, ETC.	
6. TEACHER GUIDES PHONEME MASTERY: LETTER, SOUND	
7. STUDENTS INVOLVED IN EXPLICIT SKILLS LESSON WITH TEACHER	
8. TEACHER ATTENTION TO CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT	
9. WRITING: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	
10. STUDENTS READ ORALLY	
MIN. READING WORK/PRACTICE	TALLY
11. ORAL ATTENTION TO CUING STRATEGY	
12. DISCUSSION	
13. TEACHER SCAFFOLDING ACTIVITY	
14. STUDENTS READ TRADE BOOKS	
15. OTHER ACTIVITIES: ILLUSTRATING, CREATIVE DRAMATICS, ETC.	
16. TEACHER GUIDES PHONEME MASTERY: LETTER, SOUND	
17. STUDENTS READ ORALLY	
18. TEACHER ATTENTION TO CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT	
19. STUDENTS INVOLVED IN EXPLICIT SKILLS LESSON WITH TEACHER	
20. WRITING: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	
21. STUDENTS INVOLVED WITH DRILL/WORKSHEET EXERCISES	
MIN. INDIVIDUAL READING - FAMILIAR BOOK	TALLY
22. ORAL ATTENTION TO CUING STRATEGY	
23. DISCUSSION	
24. TEACHER SCAFFOLDING ACTIVITY	
25. STUDENTS READ TRADE BOOKS	
26. OTHER ACTIVITIES: ILLUSTRATING, CREATIVE DRAMATICS, ETC.	
27. TEACHER GUIDES PHONEME MASTERY: LETTER, SOUND	
28. STUDENTS READ ORALLY	
29. TEACHER ATTENTION TO CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT	
30. STUDENTS INVOLVED IN EXPLICIT SKILLS LESSON WITH TEACHER	
31. WRITING: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	
32. STUDENTS INVOLVED WITH DRILL/WORKSHEET EXERCISES	

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